

REMARKS

Claims 1, 3-14, 16-28, 30 and 34 are pending. By the Office Action, claims 2-10 are objected to, and claims 1, 11-14, 16-28, 30-31 and 33-34 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a). By this Amendment, claims 2, 31 and 33 are canceled, and claims 1 and 3-7 are amended. Support for amended claim 1 can be found in original claim 2. No new matter is added.

Entry of this Amendment is proper under 37 C.F.R. §1.116 because the Amendment places the application in condition for allowance (for the reasons discussed herein) or places the application into better form for Appeal should an Appeal be necessary. The Amendment does not present any additional claims without canceling a corresponding number of finally rejected claims, does not raise the issue of new matter, and does not raise any new issues requiring additional search and/or consideration since the Amendment is directed to subject matter previously considered during prosecution. Furthermore, the amendments are necessary and were not earlier presented because they are in response to issues raised in the Final Rejection, and merely incorporate allowable claim 2 into claim 1. Applicants respectfully request entry of the Amendment.

Applicants thank the Examiner for the indication that claims 2-10 are objected to as dependent upon a rejected base claim, but are otherwise allowable. By this Amendment, claim 1 is amended to incorporate the limitation of non-rejected claim 2.

I. Claim Rejections

A. §103 - Clatfelter

Claims 1, 11-14, 16-28, 30-31 and 33-34 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Clatfelter. Although Applicants do not necessarily agree with the rejection, by this Amendment independent claims 31 and 33 are canceled and independent claim 1 is amended

to incorporate the subject matter of non-rejected claim 2. Accordingly, the rejection is overcome and should be withdrawn.

B. §103 - GB 2,228,662 to Schiffmann

Claim 31 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Schiffmann. Although Applicants do not necessarily agree with the rejection, by this Amendment independent claim 31 is canceled. Accordingly, the rejection is moot and should be withdrawn.

C. §103 - Yuan and Schiffmann

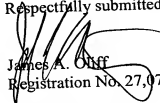
Claims 33 and 34 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Yuan in view of Schiffmann. First, Applicants note that claim 34 depends from claim 1, not claim 33, and thus the rejection appears to be improper as to claim 34. Regarding claim 33, although Applicants do not necessarily agree with the rejection, by this Amendment independent claim 33 is canceled. Accordingly, the rejection is moot and should be withdrawn.

II. Conclusion

In view of the above amendments and remarks, it is respectfully submitted that the above-identified patent application is in condition for allowance. Favorable consideration and prompt allowance are therefore respectfully requested.

Should the Examiner believe anything further would be necessary in order to place the application in condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact Applicants' undersigned representative at the telephone number listed below.

Respectfully submitted,


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Date: August 30, 2005

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